

*Morten Tolboll*

## What is karma?

In Zen it is said about the spiritual process of awakening: "In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods."

This refers to the three forms of states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. The three states can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of time. Furthermore it can be described as the personal history, the collective history and the universal history. Time and history constitute the structure under your thinking. This structure is also called the astral plane, the astral world or the Akashic records (read more about this in my article **Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice**).

The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now's lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part *not* is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to *everything* else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego's evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can't say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

Nagarjuna's argumentation leads to the thought about that human beings have two aspects: an energy aspect and a consciousness aspect. Seen from the energy aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

So, the energy aspect of human beings (compensatory karma) is closely related to the material world, laws of nature, cycles of life, yes actually pure causal regularity of mechanical kind (also read the chapter *The Lifeartist as a Natural Being* in my book **A Portrait of a Lifeartist**).

In accordance with the authentic spiritual traditions the movement of time is a power, an expression of energy, which follows some laws. These laws are also called compensatory karma. I use this concept because the concept of negative karma also has been distorted by the positive psychology movement (into what they call the law of attraction).

The energy-laws function in all cycles of life. On the plane of the outer forms there are birth and death, creation and destruction, growth and dissolution of apparently separated outer forms. This is reflected everywhere: the life-cycle of a star, a planet, a physical body, a tree or a flower; in the rise and fall of nations, political systems and civilizations; and in the inevitable cycles of gain and loss in the individual person's life.

A cycle can last from some hours to some years. There are big cycles and small cycles within the big ones. The cyclic nature of the Universe is closely connected with the impermanence of all things and all situations. Buddha made this into a central part of his teaching. It is also a central part of the teachings of Nagarjuna, which you can read about in my article **A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method**.

There are cycles with success, where things come to you, and you flourish, and cycles with defeat, where they wither away or wear down, and you become obliged to let go

of them, in order to make space so that new things can arise, or so that there can happen a transformation. If you cling to them and make resistance at that time, this means, that you deny accompanying the stream of life, and then you will suffer.

The problem with the positive psychology of the New Thought movement, and therefore the ideology of success coaching, is that it one-sided is focusing on that the up-cycles are positive, while the down-cycles are negative.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, though, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development; it is the area of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization.

When you reduce everything to the energy aspect, there can't happen any realization. Whatever you do within this area - therapy, exercises, use of drugs, stimulation of brain cells, Holotropic breathwork, etc., etc, - then it only will result in experiences without realization. It will also result in absence of awareness, because the consciousness will be distracted by the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, as well as in fragmentation.

Experiences without realization will therefore be characterized by existential categories such as unreality, division, anxiety, stagnation and meaninglessness, no matter how "divine" or "demonical" they occur to the experiencer. And that is actually in direct opposition to the genuine mystical experience, which are followed by realization. The mystical experience is namely characterized by the opposite existential categories, such as reality, co-operation, safety, movement and meaning (see my article **Suffering as an entrance to the Source**).

So in a spiritual practice it is the form of the consciousness it is about (realization), not its content (experiences).

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now's plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In spiritual practice the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness' course towards its source (the Now, the wholeness, the

otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.

So the Ego's partial consciousness is part of a greater wholeness, which is the Now, life itself. And life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active using the pure awareness, the innermost in you, and using the heartfulness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, because the life itself, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego's process; that is: with your personal time and life situation, or with the collective time and life situation. Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmically tracks. Karma (compensatory karma, or negative karma) is the subconscious consequences of the Ego's actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the wholeness - then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence changes, in the subconscious.

When your spiritual essence is sleeping, karma is automatic. The Ego's pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the wholeness, in your spiritual essence, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma. In one life ascetic, in the next libertine, then inhibited and expelled, thereupon sybarite etc. with no end, because the Ego has freedom continual to give new momentum and new course - within the karmical possible; that is to say: heredity and environment - to the Ego's pendulum (the same is happening in numerous other ways within one life). That is one reason for that nobody can tell you about your karma (about free will and heredity and environment: read my article **The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind**).

However when the Ego decides to use its free energy, its existential option to begin to awake, then the karma structures changes. Then you begin to use and work with your spiritual dimension. This dimension is not subject to the karmical structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The wholeness is over, is transcendent, in relation to the laws and mechanisms, which regulate the infrastructures of the wholeness. The wholeness is not subject to the laws and energy transformations, which rule between the constitutive parts of the wholeness.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmical lawfulnesses and can therefore

relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmacially structures, which after all not only rule between the many life's of your spiritual essence, but all the same are known psychological mirrored from the Ego's dreams and the Ego's life - then you can change attitude.

Instead of swinging with the laws you can choose to observe. Instead of identifying yourself with impulses and incentives, emotions and thought tendencies, you can separate yourself, become a witness, become alert. And hereby you can break the karmacially automatism.

As mentioned: Human beings have two aspects: an energy aspect and a consciousness aspect. Seen from the energy aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses.

Note, that your thoughts (the mind) belong to the energy aspect, and not the consciousness aspect. I say this because they in the very popular movement of New Thought, Law of attraction and positive psychology, have confused the consciousness with the thoughts. They here think that you can produce progressive karma (what they call the law of attraction), with your thoughts. You can't, because that is not an awakening proces. Actually it would just produce more compensatory (negative) karma. It is only the spiritual awakening of your consciousness, and its direction in towards the source, the form of consciousness, that will produce progressive karma (see my article **The New Thought movement and the law of attraction**).

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: a continuum, which streams are subject to laws; a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective. Note though, that this must not be confused with any quantum mystical theories about quantum jumping, quantum healing, time travel, etc., etc. As I have shown in my articles **Quantum mysticism and its web of lies**, and **Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr**, then laws are still effective within quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics, no matter how weird it is, belongs to the energy aspect of human beings.

The wholeness, your spiritual essence, is normally the discontinuous aspect; normally, because this is of course seen from the point of view of the ego-continuum. Seen from the point of view of your spiritual essence, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the spiritual

essence the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream and the continuum of the ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of the wholeness – or your spiritual essence), then the cosmic structur-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma, a progressive karma will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma.

The process of your spiritual essence, your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma along through the various incarnations. What you spiritual have reached to realize in one life, will in the spiritual energy be there in the next life, or in the dimension of your spiritual essence.

If your spiritual essence is sleeping, the spiritual energy is quiet. Without traceable activity. A human being can live a whole life, yes, life after life, in absolute sleep.

If you however existentially begin to seek, to seek the spiritual, the divine, to seek love, if you choose to use your energy and your life in that way, then the spiritual energy will begin to vibrate, to become active. Only the images, which have achieved to imprint themselves in the spiritual energy, will be transferred as progressive karma. Your spiritual essence will remember its dreams from life to life. And your spiritual essence will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your spiritual essence, are the progressive karma.

This is what is meant with, that people are born with different levels of spiritual development.

Concerning the progressive karma it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the spiritual essence. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It lies as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life, in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma. In your spiritual history there is a map. This map shows the dream-tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image.

There is no doubt about, that Karen Blixen, though not fully conscious, had a sense of this map. All her books are about destiny seen in this way; they are about people who either live in accordance with this map, or in discordance with it. This map, this universal image was, what she referred to as the "ancient", the "original", and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. And a universal image is of a holographic nature, therefore it contains all other images, personal, collective and universal, and therefore it contains the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life. It is the universal history of the astral plane; the Akashic records, or the wholeness, which is awake (see my article **The philosophy of Karen Blixen**).

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography. It requires work to find it. If you through development, through training, expand your consciousness to the spiritual dimension, then this invisible script will be made visible, the dream-tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found.

Alaya-vijnana is a term used within Yogacara Buddhism to indicate the store-house consciousness, or the great vision, which consists of universal images. It is also called the Akashic records. These universal images are a kind of energetical mandala-structures or yantra-fields. They have a linguistic nature, but it is of a visionary kind. These images are composite by sound and color, symbol and structure. You could also say, that they are what the philosophers call unmoved matter, a worldaspect of sound-colours and symbol-structures, an ocean of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. Altogether filled with information about life. Together the great vision, an information-ocean of holographic nature.

We have historical records about this vision. For example there within Tibetan Buddhism exists a peculiar doctrine about the so-called Tertöns (tib. Gter-bston - the unearthers of the hidden books), people who are born with a special karmacial connection to a long ago deceased master, and who, because of the connection to this master's oneness-consciousness with the universal vision, now can collect treasures of information in from the vision, or the universal images, which after all work in synchronism with the Now, and which therefore lie in the wholeness, in the continuum of eternity. The master was hiding and storing holy "texts" various places in the universal images with that purpose, that a future "Tertön" would be able to find this knowledge again, decipher and publish it.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol) is in that way one of the Tibetan texts, which is considered for having been hidden in the universal vision by the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Sambhava, and which was found again by a Tertön with the name Rigzin Karma Ling-pa. Padma Sambhava is considered for having hidden

many holy texts, whereafter he gave some of his disciples the yoga ability to become reincarnated in the right time - which were determined astrologically - for here to find the scriptures again.

After an estimated judgment, the spiritual texts, which already have been taken out by Tertöns in the run of the centuries, would form a cyclopedia on around sixtyfive volumes with average around four hundred pages in each volume.

I can see no reason to deny the doctrine of the Tertöns. You can't just deny people's experiences (followed by realization) written down through centuries. This would in itself be unscientific, irrational, and besides, deeply arrogant. It is important though, to remember the philosophical aspects of the spiritual journey; that is: the use of rationality and critical thinking, which actually also is a central part of the training of the Tibetan monks. The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement, is namely, that precisely because the above mentioned, normal inaccessible, areas, in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, yes, then they are open for all sorts of fantasies.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmacially experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the collective time and its images, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its “experts” and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation (see my article **Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality**).

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that in order to equalize old karma, or because it is his “destiny”. He is being told that he is going to meet certain people, are being told about other people, etc., etc. All this is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses. It all origin from the collective time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore, in deeper sense, not karmacial and not in the least spiritual.



Precisely like philosophy of existence the spiritual traditions say that you in your opinion formation and identity formation must be yourself, live in compliance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

If you follow clairvoyants' advices the direct opposite happens: In your opinion formation and identity formation you will strive after becoming something else than what you are, you will imitate (model) others, be a slave of others' ideas and ideals, and your actions will be characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. Instead of equalizing old karma (compensatory karma is what normally is understood as karma, or negative karma) they will create new compensatory karma.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences (that is: realizes) compensatory karma, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatic identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actual realizes its karmacially conditions, will precisely, by force of realization, break the automatic process.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmacially talk and experiences of the "experts" and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression (see my article **Regression psychotherapies**). None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. If you namely use the karma idea in that way (the idea of a person's spiritual destiny), it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards or forwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a guru, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost. It is your awareness in the now that will find the progressive karma, and this awareness you can of course only practise yourself.

So the universal images lie as a kind of dream-tracks and song-lines in your actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. They can manifest

themselves in symbols, which contain informations about the development process of your spiritual essence. Informations from the universal images are, contrary to informations from the collective images, not contradiction-filled and split, but healing and synthesizing (see my article **Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences**). They are the map, which shows the path from the Ego to your spiritual essence. When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the spiritual essence.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma (his *spiritual* destiny; the dreamtracks and songlines in his spiritual journey; the map that shows his way to enlightenment). The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what people through a system may be able to think about the collective time, or fantasize about karmacially experiences and spiritual evolution. Nobody can tell you about your karmacially structures, or your spiritual evolution (or the world's spiritual evolution), or what will happen if you use their techniques. All people, models or techniques - clairvoyants, regression therapists, astrologers, shamans, channelers, Ken Wilber's integral method, Holotropic Breathwork, Human Design system, Law of attraction etc., etc., etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacial – that is: with your spiritual growth - are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

In my article **Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**, I show the consequences of the very popular self-help idea, that you psychological can control reality as you want, and therefore the concept of karma. In my article **The New Thought movement and the law of attraction**, I show how the concept of karma here has been distorted so that it fits with self-centredness. In my article **James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy**, I show a concrete example of how compensatory karma strikes back when you abuse the concept of karma in an egoistic way.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmacially course (a person's life-history, destiny) and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that's the same with all spiritual.

That is the other reason for why nobody can tell you about your karma.

*Related articles:*

**What is Dream Yoga?**

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice**

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences**

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance**

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling**

*All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: [www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com](http://www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com)*

Copyright © 2014 by Morten Tolboll.

Terms of use:

[http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/deed.en\\_US](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/deed.en_US)